

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Newtown Action Alliance, I am submitting this testimony in support of HB-6355, *An Act Concerning Risk Protection Orders or Warrants*, to strengthen Connecticut's current Extreme Risk Protection Order law (ERPO).

Connecticut's version of the ERPO law has already saved many lives since 1999 and adding the HB-6355 provisions to the existing public health policy will save additional lives.

Individuals who can legally possess firearms can become dangerous to themselves or others. The criminal background check system to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people are primarily designed to function at the time of purchase. These measures cannot detect dangers that family members, household members, friends, healthcare professionals and others observe long after the firearms were purchased.

Data shows that people considering suicide often give some warning sign of their intentions, and the same has been shown in an [FBI study](#) on mass shooters. An average shooter displayed four to five observable and concerning behaviors before their attacks.

Offering a last-resort mechanism for removing firearms or limiting access to firearms temporarily with due process protections can prevent gun tragedies in our homes and communities. HB-6355 gives family members, household members, and healthcare professionals the tools necessary to proactively intervene to save the lives of their loved ones and others.

An ERPO law that does not allow a judge to determine that the risk of imminent harm to self or others no longer exists before firearms are returned when the protection order expires, is not a smart policy.

The concerns expressed by opponents of HB-6355 that the ERPO laws violate due process have absolutely no merit. According to a 2019 Congressional Research Service [report](#), no court has found that an ex-parte or final ERPO violated any aspect of the United States constitution---on Second Amendment or due process grounds.

Similarly, there is no evidence that the ERPO process is used to harass gun owners. In Connecticut, judges are required to have probable cause to issue ex-parte orders and clear and convincing evidence to issue final risk protection orders. Just like any court hearing, a person who falsely testifies under oath would be guilty of committing perjury, which is a crime. Giving false written information to a police officer or public servant, under oath, is also a crime.

Please vote to send HB-6355 to the full General Assembly to strengthen Connecticut's ERPO law. Connecticut should lead the nation with the strongest gun laws with the lowest rate of gun deaths and injuries.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance
NewtownAction.org
P.O. Box 3325, Newtown CT 06470